**Similarities between Terrestrial and Aquatic systems**

* in both terrestrial and aquatic environments the ecosystems include communities made up of a *variety of species*,
* within both terrestrial and aquatic communities there are populations at the *different trophic (nutrient) levels*,
* a great deal of *mutual interdependence exists between species in both terrestrial and aquatic environments*,
* in undisturbed terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems *equilibrium is reached*, i.e. very few major changes are observed over a period of time,

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| fynbos7b.GIF (57603 bytes) | seash34b.GIF (35794 bytes) |
| The Knysna forest in South Africa, an example of an terrestrial ecosystem. | A marine aquatic ecosystem |

**Differences between Terrestrial and Aquatic systems**

* because aquatic environments are so rich in nutrients *they support more live* than equivalent terrestrial ecosystems. The small drifting photosynthetic organisms of the oceans, referred to collectively as phytoplankton are regarded as the major photosynthesizers, or *primary producers*, of the earth,
* aquatic environments are *much more stable* than terrestrial environments, with smaller fluctuations in temperature and other variables,
* *oxygen* (because there is very much less present) is sometimes a limiting factor\*\* an aquatic habitats but this is seldom the case in terrestrial habitats,
* *light* can be a limiting factor in some aquatic habitats, but in most terrestrial environments there is hardly ever a a shortage of light,
* terrestrial animals are influenced *far more by gravity*, while water supports aquatic organisms.

\*\* **limiting factors** place upper limits on the size of a population & can be biotic or abiotic

Similarities & Difference Between Terrestrial & Aquatic Ecosystems

Venn Diagram --